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"One of the things which we most want, is a serious and solemn retrospect; a strict examination, without favour, into past conduct. In any ministry, the composition of which would prevent this, or that would check it, though but in the smallest degree, the people would have no confidence. The nation, in the midst of this terrible contest, and breaking down under its burdens, was, only in the last year, loaded with a fresh mortgage of about 800,000*l.* for grants of money and pensions. Is this to go on? Is this to pass so? If it be, *Old Rose* is just the same to us as any one of the Opposition, or all of them put together. Let us hope, therefore, that there will be no compromises; no concessions in order to obtain votes and secure majorities: let us hope, that those, who are against the Pitt system of government, will adhere steadily to their principles, though they should be left in a minority, as to numbers however small. If they do this, they will increase like the grain of mustard seed; but, if they adopt a contrary course, they will continue to dwindle in character and in influence, till the poisonous weeds will once more over-run them, usurp the soil, and render it habitable for nothing but vermin."—POLITICAL REGISTER, 18th January, 1806, p. 95.

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## SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

"THE BUDGET."—Amongst the many things, as to which I have, in common with other men, experienced great disappointment, is the continuance of the use of this despicable term, when speaking of the annual statement of the nation's financial affairs. To be sure no term better suited to a system of peddling and jobbing could have been devised; but, we were in hopes, that the thing as well as the name would have been gotten rid of; instead of which, however, we find, that the whole is to remain; and, if we may judge from the specimen just given us, the evils of the system are to be augmented, rather than diminished.—The Budget (since we must continue to use the hateful word) was opened by the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Henry Petty, on Friday the 28th ultimo. To go over the whole of the detail of this exhibition of confused ideas is not my intention. To catch hold of some of the prominent facts will be sufficient for every present purpose; and, as to an exposure of the erroneous principles upon which the Chancellor proceeded, there will be time enough hereafter for that. The *Supply*, wanted for the year 1806, was stated at 43,618,472*l.* But, who would not imagine, particularly when coming from a person, who professed to wish for the moral nudity of the Roman stage; who would not imagine, that, from the mouth of such a person, the public would have learnt, that the word *Supply* was not meant to include the *whole of the expenses of the year*? The fact is, however, that, to the sum just mentioned, must be added 28,000,000*l.* and rather more, being the interest for this one year only, upon the national debt; and about two millions for

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Civil List, &c. and, that, of course, the whole of the *Supply* necessary for this year is nearly 74 millions sterling; though, observe, there cannot now be the least notion of any connection with powers abroad; there can be no notion of foreign expeditions; no notion of undertaking any thing more than what is absolutely necessary to our mere domestic defence: in this state it is, observe, that our affairs demand an expenditure of 74 millions a year!—The accounts of last year, though a positive act of parliament require them to be produced previous to the 25th of March, have not yet been produced; or, at least, not printed; so that, we cannot precisely state how much the taxes of last year yielded; but, if we are to judge from the amount of the loan now made, and of the estimated new taxes now imposed, the whole income of last year amounted to about 48 millions; whence the reader will observe, of course, that, supposing the income, from the taxes already existing, to be as great this year as it was last year, there remained 26 millions to be provided. Towards this sum, however, one million has been drawn from the amount of the prizes taken from the Spaniards "*before the war*;" and Lord Henry Petty must have felt peculiar satisfaction in being the agent to appropriate this sum in aid of the national income; because we must all recollect, how he and his present colleagues in office spoke of the act of making those prizes! The next resource has been the customs and excise, where, in the shape of additional duties, there is to be imposed rather more than two millions. Next comes the great and final object of taxation, formerly called the *Income Tax*, but now called the *Property Tax*, and which, every one



feels to be what Mr. Fox formerly described it, a tax which leaves no man any thing, in this world, that he can call his own. This tax is to be augmented to 10 per centum; and, by that means, is estimated to produce 5 millions more than it did last year. Last comes the loan, which, for Great Britain (there being a loan of 2 millions for Ireland) is 18 millions. Let us recapitulate:

## INCOME FOR 1806.

Total of the income of the nation, from taxes, last year	£48,000,000
Drawn from amount of prizes “made before the war”	1,000,000
Additional Excise and Custom duties	2,000,000
Additional Income Tax	5,000,000
Loan	18,000,000

Total income for 1806 74,000,000

## EXPENDITURE FOR 1806.

Navy, Army, Ordnance, Grants to Naval Officers, to the East India Company, &c. &c.	£44,000,000
Civil List, Bounties, &c. &c.	2,000,000
Interest and charges on account of the national debt	28,000,000

Total expenditure for 1806 74,000,000

It was before observed, that we have not yet the accounts of last year; it will also be observed, that this statement is upon estimate; and, that I have put the whole in round numbers for the sake of clearness. The view, however, is quite enough in detail for any purpose that I or the reader can have; and that it is substantially correct, I am by no means afraid to assert.—Of the doctrines and opinions held forth, upon this occasion, by Lord H. Petty and Mr. Fox we shall, perhaps, find an opportunity of speaking by-and-by, when we come to remark upon the debate which took place at the time of making the report upon the Budget; but here we will confine ourselves to two or three detached observations, growing naturally out of this statement of the financial affairs of the country.—And, first, as to the new taxes, their amount is, as we have seen, about 7 millions, to be collected, observe, *every year*; for, we shall soon see, that the distinction of *wartaxes* and *permanent taxes* is a sheer fallacy, into which the new Chancellor and his noble principal have fallen, probably for the want of knowing better. That the nation should be able to raise 7 millions of taxes

in the year, in addition to what it already raises, seems, at first sight, quite incredible. Indeed, 7 millions will not be raised. Perhaps not more than 4 millions; and, it will be surprising indeed, if, in the next Budget (if there should ever be another) we should not find on the side of the Supply, 2 or 3 millions on account of “*deficiency in ways and means*,” just as there is this year. *Something*, however, will be raised in consequence of this addition to the taxes; but, whatever the amount of it may be, we must remember, that it will be more of *nominal* than of *real* value; for, one inevitable consequence of the addition will be, an *addition to the circulating medium*, that is to say, to the paper money: that money will be further depreciated of course; and, therefore, the addition to the real value of the taxes raised, in consequence of the new imposition, will not be nearly so great as the nominal value. Thus, the wonder, so frequently expressed, that the nation is able to bear these additional burdens, ceases to be so great as it otherwise would be. But, though, upon the whole, the burden is not so much augmented as people in general seem to imagine, every addition to the taxes produces an addition to the evils we endure; for, they operate as a great disturber of prices; they come suddenly to cause a disproportion between the price of labour and that of the necessaries of life; they impair the spirit of all contracts for term of years; and, if it was just (as I allow it was) for the Lord Chancellor to award, the other day, a certain sum to a plaintiff who had been kept from his money by a defendant; if it was just, in such a case for the Lord Chancellor to award a certain sum on account of the *depreciation of money*, where is the justice of compelling land-owners to put up with the receipt of the mere nominal amount of the rents for which they let their farms fifteen or eighteen years ago? Why should not such persons have a legal as well as an equitable claim to a restoration of the spirit of the leases which they have granted? The other evil of these additions to the taxes is, that, in whatever degree they produce a *real* addition to the revenue, they produce a *real* hardship upon the people. We are told, that the taxes *fall back again* into the hands of the various classes of the community; and this is very true; but, they do not, according to the figure that has been used, fall back again “in dews to refresh” and to fertilize the fields whence they “have been drawn;” they fall back in partial showers and in torrents. They are drawn up from the whole of the people; or



more properly speaking, from the whole of the labour of the people; but, they descend, first, into the hands of a few; in their next stage into the hands of a greater number; and, before they reach the hand of labour, they must, in some way or other, be *again earned*, and that, too, from those, who, generally speaking, have never laboured to obtain them. And, hence it is, that we invariably find the poverty and the misery of the labourer increase in an exact proportion to the increase of the real value of the taxes imposed. But, the greatest evil of all those which attend the raising of new taxes, is, that they invariably add to the power of the minister of the day, in proportion to their real amount. When the minister tells us, that a tax *yields* so much, he never thinks it necessary to dwell upon the circumstance of its putting a large sum into the hands of the *tax-gatherer*. The truth is, however, that, upon an average, about *one* pound out of every *fifteen* goes into the pocket of some person or other employed in the imposing or the receiving, or the distributing of it. It is no matter to us whether this pound is swallowed by some such man as Lord Liverpool, or John Fordyce, as collectors; or by such as the Marquis of Buckingham or Lord Grenville, as tellers or auditors of the expenditure; it is no matter to us whether it be swallowed by such men, or by petty excisemen and tide-waiters; certain it is that it is paid by the people, though no very great ostentation appears on the part of the minister, in making them acquainted with the fact. Every new tax, therefore, adds to the emoluments of the tax-gatherers, or adds to the number of the tax-gatherers themselves; and, in either case, it must, in an exact proportion to its real value, or, at least, the addition that it makes to the real value of the revenue of the state, add to the influence and the power of the minister of the day; so that, if the system of taxation could be carried on to the point whither it tends, and at which, if unobstructed, it would certainly arrive, all the people, rich as well as poor, would become mere servants of the government. The landlords, as they are yet called, would be the stewards, the tenants would be the bailiffs, and the labourers would be maintained wholly out of the taxes, instead of being, as they now are, so maintained in part. All, yea all, would receive their bread at the hand of the minister of the day. There would be no such thing as private property. And is not the progress towards this point already visible? Are not the taxes so very great in proportion to the value of every species of property, as

to make a man hesitate before he calls any thing his own? In one instance, that of the "*redemption*," as it was called, of the land-tax, the late minister seized upon part of the real property of every man in the kingdom; he confiscated and sold it; and, though the owner was allowed, if able, to buy it back again, that circumstance did not in the least alter the nature of the act. With respect to the *Church*, it was a complete act of confiscation; for, when the land was once sold, it was *impossible* that it should be bought back again. It was a real seizure of a part of the church property; it was an act of alienation for ever; it was an example for further seizure; yet was there not a bishop to open his lips against it; and, which is curious enough, the only man, in either house of parliament to oppose the measure, was SIR FRANCIS BURDETT! As to the *property-tax*, I have no more objection to that than to any other tax now laid on; for, say what we will about them, they must all now finally operate in the same way. Yet, in illustration of the general description above given of the tendency of the taxing system, when carried to its utmost extent, we may observe, that, by the means of one part of the law, which imposes this tax, the government not only comes to examine into, to supervise, the transactions between individuals; but, it immediately interferes between the landlord and the tenant; it goes to the tenant and demands from him a part of the rent, which, by agreement, he is bound to pay to his landlord; and, thereby, it actually does, in so much at least, break the contract between the landlord and the tenant. How far, under such circumstances, a man can, with propriety of language, call his house or his land *his own*, might become a question; but, that the principle once admitted, may lead to the taking of one half of the rent, nay, the whole of it, who will be bold enough to deny?—It was the danger, the alarming danger, to which this points, that formed the ground of Mr. Fox's opposition to the Income Tax. He said, and very truly, that, when once the government were permitted to make thus free with the real property of individuals, there was no telling where it might stop. Now, indeed, that gentleman appears to have completely subdued all apprehensions of this sort. He who saw great danger in the raising of the tax from 5 per centum to 6½ per centum, sees no danger at all in the raising of it, at once, from 6½ to 10 per centum! Upon this part of the subject I will say no more. I need say nothing. The feel and say enough. But, I cannot help



observing, that, while Mr. Fox seemed to regard this addition as the *last*, Lord Henry Petty took care not to say any thing to encourage such a hope. He said, that the tax was now raised to the point, where it was likely to remain *for some time*; but, he promised us nothing with regard to a final termination of the rise; and, indeed, if the funding system be to be continued, his lordship was perfectly right; for, in that case, we may be well assured, that a further, and a further, and a further rise must take place, till, if the system go on unobstructed, the whole of the nation will become what the fund-holders now are, mere annuitants of the government. The wiseacre squire may grin and shew his butter-teeth at this as much as he pleases; but, he may be assured, that, if this system go on, the question will be, not how much he shall contribute towards the maintenance of the state, but how much the state shall allow him to live upon. Let it, however, be acknowledged, that those who are for maintaining what they call "public credit," have no right whatever to find fault with the ministry for this augmentation of the income tax. The money must be had. It can no longer be gotten from taxes upon objects of consumption. It can no longer be gotten from taxes upon the real property itself. The interest of the debt and the millions in pensions and grants must go unpaid, unless the rents and the incomes of the people are resorted to; and, if it be necessary to pay, it must be necessary to resort to those rents and those incomes. I deny such necessity: I would no longer pay interest upon the debt, and I would greatly reduce the amount of pensions and of grants; or, I would, at least, in this last respect, stop where we are; but, to hear men talking, this minute, about the absolute necessity of paying 28 millions a year on account of the national debt, and, the next minute railing against the ministers for adding to the rate of the Property-Tax, in order to obtain the means of meeting this necessity, cannot fail to excite one's contempt. No: if you will have one, you must have the other. The ministers you call upon to pay the interest of the debt; you make loud clamours against those who would advise them to stop; keep good your engagements, say you; never let it be said, that a British parliament was guilty of "a breach of faith." This is all very easily said: all this demands nothing but good lungs and an empty head, accompanied with an anxious desire to be thought more honest than your neighbour, but to pay the cost is

not so easy; to contribute your share towards this interest is not so pleasant; and, therefore, you set up a cry against taxes, and therein you expose yourselves to the derision of the world.—It was not, nor is it, my intention to enter very fully, at present, into the state of the finances; but, I cannot help offering a remark or two upon an expression that fell from the new Chancellor of the Exchequer relative to the *war-taxes*. It is the term merely that I object to. *Why* are they called war-taxes? Is it because they *will not be necessary in time of peace*? This present year the whole expenditure will amount to 74 millions. The whole of the taxes are estimated at 56 millions. The rest (18 millions) is to be made up by a loan. Now, suppose peace arrived. *What reduction* of expense do you think would take place? Do you think that any reduction at all would take place for the first year? Do you think that the peace would last two years? But, seriously, *what reduction* do you think could take place? The annual charge on account of debt is 28 millions; the Civil List and other grants and bounties amount to 2 millions. Here are 30 out of the 56 millions. The "war-taxes" are taken at 19½ millions; so that, if the war-taxes are to be abolished at the peace, whenever it comes, there will remain just 6½ millions wherewith to maintain the army, the navy, the ordnance, and all the other establishments, and to defray all the other incidents, the gross charge on account of which amounts now to 44 millions a year! What an abuse of words is it, then, to talk of "war-taxes"! What folly to entertain the hope, that the Property Tax will ever again be for a moment suspended while the national debt shall exist, and while it shall annually load the nation with its enormous expense! No: while interest is paid upon that debt, never can these war-taxes be taken off. They never can be diminished; or, if they are, a loan must annually be made to supply the deficiency. Nay, further, I am firmly persuaded, that not only must they be continued in time of peace, but that loans must still be made to help them out: loans not quite so large as at present, perhaps, but loans still to a considerable amount. The notion which men naturally have of a *war-tax* is, that it is calculated to defray all the expenses arising from war, leaving the other part of the revenue to be applied to the purposes for which it was wanted before the war, and standing, in fact, in the place of loans. But we (God bless us!) have war-taxes and loans besides. Out of 44 millions for the





support of the army, the navy, &c. we shall, this year, borrow 18 millions. There remain 26 millions. Now, if peace were made to-morrow, does any man believe, that we could make a reduction to the amount to 18 millions? Does any man believe, that, considering our present situation with regard to the enemy, we could reduce our present establishments and expenses in the amount of more than two-fifths? Not one man of common information in the country believes it; and, is it, then, to act upon the maxims of the lantern or glass-house morality, to give the name of war-taxes to 19 millions out of the 26 millions? Is it, indeed, my lord, thus, that you mean to convince us, that you wish to let the people see the naked truth; that you wish to render subjects of this sort familiar to their minds; and that, in short, you wish them to become perfectly acquainted with the nature of their situation and of what they have to expect? My lord, suffer me to put this question to you: Does your lordship really believe, that, as long as the present charge on account of the national debt shall continue to be paid, we shall ever again, in peace or in war, see the year, in which a loan, to some amount or other, must not be made? And, if you answer in the negative, as I think you must, let me ask you how you could, with your uncorrupted mind filled with the glass-house morality, fall into the jargon of your predecessor, and give to the taxes that never can be repealed an epithet evidently calculated to produce a persuasion, that they were to exist no longer than the war? — On Monday, the 31st ultimo, when the motion was made for going into a committee upon the subjects connected with the Budget, Mr. FRANCIS entered, for the first time, not only on his part, but on the part of any member of either House of parliament, into the discussion of the great points the only points, indeed, worthy of the attention of a statesman, or a legislator. He made some previous remarks relative to the Property Tax, and, particularly, the mode of managing the proposed exemptions. Then he observed, that, it was not without some astonishment, he had heard the country described as being in a *prosperous* state; and he asked, with what propriety such an epithet could be applied to a country, where the labouring part of the community were supported, not by the fruit of their labour, but, in considerable part, out of *taxes*, raised upon their employers. “Tell me not,” said he, “of the flourishing, of the brilliant, of the dazzling, shew of

“the metropolis; for, such, we are well informed, was the situation of Paris, at the very moment, when the Mississippi bubble was ready to burst; when the paper-money of the projector LAW had drawn the wealth of France to the metropolis, and had spread misery over the rest of the kingdom.” As to the *Sinking Fund*, the good effects of which had, on the preceding Friday, been so much dwelt upon by Lord Henry Petty, Mr. Francis said, that he had not been able to discover any one of those effects; that he could not perceive, that it had lessened, or that it was likely to lessen, the burdens of the people; and, at a time when we were supporting it at the expense of 8 millions of taxes annually raised, he saw no reason why part of it, at least, should not be applied to the purposes of the year, and, of course to the prevention of the necessity of new taxes to the immense amount in which they had now been imposed. He further observed, that the sole remedy which, as he thought, was left to us, was to do away the law, that screened the Bank of England from paying their promissory notes *in cash*. — Mr. Fox, spoke after Mr. Francis. His answer (if it was intended as an answer) to the remark relative to the evidences of national prosperity, was not by any means successful. He talked something about other causes (than that of taxation and paper-money), of the misery, and the abject dependence of the people, without, however, either admitting or denying the fact. This last was not candid, unless he supposed, which, perhaps, was the fair construction, that the admission was implied; as well he might, indeed, seeing that a denial would instantly have been met by documents upon the table of the House, whence it would have appeared, that the taxes now raised annually for the relief of the poor are, nominally, at least, as great in amount, as the whole annual revenue of the country in the reign of Queen Anne! As to those *other causes*, I should, I must confess, have liked to hear them explained by a person of Mr. Fox's penetration and wonderful powers of statement. But, to make me a convert to the doctrine, I must hear arguments quite different from those that I have ever yet heard. We have been told, that the principal cause is the poor-laws themselves. I do not much like the poor laws. They arose out of pressing circumstances; they are not wise in their principle; they have, in all likelihood, operated mischievously; but, how comes it, that the mischief has kept an exact pace with the increase of the taxes, and more especially



with the increase of paper-money? This may not be *proof*, but it is a strong corroboration of the reasoning, upon this subject, attempted in the preceeding pages. To hear a rich merchant talking of the prosperous state of the country; to hear the same from a fat placeman or grantee, has in it nothing surprising; for, if they reside chiefly in, or about, the metropolis, they really have reason to believe that the country is in a prosperous state. But, when we are speaking of national prosperity, what have we in our minds? Is not the *happiness of the people* the idea that precedes all others? Do we not contemplate the absence of the misery and of the degrading vices thereon attendant? Do we not please ourselves in thinking of a healthy, well-fed, well-clad, cheerful, and, in a great degree, independent, labouring population? To complete the picture of national prosperity, there must be a love of country and of glory in the people, and an absence of all dread from foreign hostility, without forgetting a perfect security from domestic oppression, arising whether from open despotism, or from the secret and silent influence of corruption. But, without stopping to *prove*, that, in all these last-mentioned respects, the picture now exhibited in England answers precisely to that just given, we may insist, that the happiness of the people, as exemplified in the comforts they enjoy, is the very first thing to be considered; and, then, when we come to find, that, out of a population of less than 9 millions, there are more than 1 million of paupers, exclusive of the persons supported by charitable foundations, we can be at no loss as to how we shall decide upon the question of the prosperity of England. In applying this to the remark of Mr. Francis, it is of great importance again to observe, that the pauperizing of the people has come on with strides exactly commensurate with those of the taxing and paper-money system. Previous to the American war, the paupers were comparatively very few. The debt and taxes created by that war augmented the number; but, the great augmentation has taken place since the commencement of the fatal reign of Mr. Pitt; since the establishment of the paper-money system by that “propitious measure,” the Sinking Fund! I know of one particular parish, where, about 25 years ago, there were only 7 persons upon the poor-books; now, there are not more than seven labouring families who are not upon the poor-books, the parish containing above a hundred of such families! This is a strong, and may be a singular instance;

but, in a degree somewhat approaching this, has been the melancholy change in every part of England. Let us, then, hear no more of “national prosperity,” of “abundant resources;” let us hear no more of the beneficent effects of the Sinking Fund, until we have proof of some change, in this respect, for the better. It is worthy of remark, that neither Old Rose nor any other of the Pitts, who undertook the defence of their system, said a word upon this subject. Some time ago, there appeared, indeed, in the Courier newspaper, an essay in defence of the Pitt system, in which essay, the increase of the paupers was ascribed to the too great indulgence of the rich, who, it was said, had been too ready to feed and otherwise cherish the idle and the profligate; and, there was a hint, that a little gentle *castigation*, instead of parish aid, might not be amiss now and then, and in a degree proportioned to the state of the patient! From a disciple of the Pitt school such opinions will excite no surprise, though we hear him, in the same breath, calling upon the nation for money to pay the debt of his master; but, surely, such opinions will be entertained by nobody else, when it can be, and has been, proved, that, as things now are, it is impossible for the day-labouring man, to earn by that labour a sufficiency of *bread* for himself, a wife, and three children, to say nothing about drink, clothing, lodging, or firing. This has been proved; the proof is, unfortunately, always at hand, and it is undeniable. Shall we, then, still be told; shall we be insulted with the assertion, that the nation is in a state of *prosperity*?—With regard to the Sinking Fund, Mr. Fox, in speaking of it with *commendation*, was certainly consistent with his formerly expressed opinions; but, here let me say, that, in ascribing the merit of it to Mr. Pitt; in praising Mr. Pitt for establishing it, he was clearly inconsistent with his declarations formerly made. He said, that, let who would have been minister, a Sinking Fund must have been established, because it was the universal opinion, at the time, that a Sinking Fund ought to be established; “but,” said he, “the thing having been done, and having been adhered to with success, assuredly, the praise of the House and the nation is due, on that account at least, to the minister who did it.” Now, though I have not the book before me, I will venture to assert, that, on the 6th or 7th of May, 1802, in a debate upon the merits of Mr. Pitt, brought on by a motion of Lord Belgrave for the



thanks of the House to that gentleman, Mr. Fox, upon the subject of the Sinking Fund, which had been introduced as a topic of praise by Lord Belgrave, said, "I never can hold it just to praise him for that of which he was not the inventor, and which he adopted at the suggestion of myself." I speak from memory, and will not, therefore, bind myself down as to the words; but, for the meaning I pledge myself. Whether, therefore, this great change as to principle of action has been produced by more mature reflection, or by that influence which we have seen so powerfully operating in other cases, and especially with regard to the affairs of India, I must leave the reader to determine.—With respect to the merits of the Sinking Fund itself, it will be easily conceived, that this is not the place to enter at large upon the subject. Indeed (and I gladly embrace the opportunity of giving the intimation) this is a subject, that I hold myself bound to discuss in a manner that shall say to the public, "here are *all* the arguments that this writer has to urge against the measure." There are three persons, each of them of great talents, who have condescended to submit to me their thoughts upon the question that has been agitated relative to my proposition for destroying the funding system. They will have perceived, that other more immediately interesting matter has kept back their valuable communications; but, my intention is to lay these communications before the public as soon as possible, and, at the same time, to maintain my opinions with every argument that shall suggest itself to my mind; and, as the *justice* of adopting the measure I propose must rest upon the proof of its being *necessary* in order to save the nation from ruin, I shall, in order to establish this necessity, be bound to *prove* that the Sinking Fund is inefficient for the purpose which it professes to have in view.—In the mean while, however, there was an argument made use of by Mr. Fox, in answer to Mr. Francis, that I cannot refrain from noticing. Mr. Francis had said, that neither he nor any other man had felt, or could describe, any *good* that the sinking fund had produced, except that of *keeping up the price of the 3 per cents.* "Now," said Mr. Fox, and in a very triumphant tone and manner, "if it *has done this*, it has produced a great deal of good, and deserves unbounded applause; for, in so doing, it has kept down the amount of the debt, by enabling the government to borrow at a much lower rate than it otherwise could have done; and, if it had

"not been for this Sinking Fund operating in this salutary way, I ask the honourable gentleman, what, at this day, must have been the amount of the debt, taking into view the many and great loans that have been made since the Sinking Fund was established?" Whereupon, Old Rose and Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson and Mr. Sturges, cried *hear! hear! hear!* as vehemently as if the "heaven-born" minister had still been alive and speaking. But, with submission, and without prejudice to these heart-cheering plaudits, I would wish to ask Mr. Fox (and I am sure he will excuse me for it) a question or two upon this point. Do you think, Sir, that, if there had been no Sinking Fund, the many and great loans that have been made, since the year 1792, *would have been made at all?* Do you think, that, if taxes had not been raised, where-with to send Commissioners into the stock-market, that market would not, long and long ago, have been shut up? This not being the case, do you think, that, if, in the year 1793, the minister had been compelled to collect his means from the people at once, instead of quietly mortgaging the revenue, it would have had a bad effect? Or, viewing the operation of the Sinking Fund in another light, do you think, that, if this fund had not existed, the cash payments at the Bank would have been stopped; that specie would have been banished out of the country; that a total disturbance of prices would have taken place; that contracts between man and man would have been virtually violated to the extent in which they now are; that the Property Tax would ever have been thought of; and that, the ruin of thousands on the one hand, or of millions on the other, would, as it now does, have stared us in the face? To the *first* of these questions it is, however, that I should like to obtain an answer; for, until that answer be given, the argument so cheered by the Roses and the Huskissons will, I am afraid, be found to have little else than the honour of that cheering to support it.—With regard to Mr. Francis's idea of applying a part of the taxes, now raised to support the Sinking Fund, to the purpose of preventing the imposition of new taxes, Mr. Fox said, that he did not, if a time of tranquillity should come, see any objection to it; that it was a question of degree, a question whether more or less of those taxes should be so applied; but, it is worthy of remark, that, when Lord Henry Petty came to speak, Mr. Fox having previously left the House, he took special care to state, that, on no account whatever, ought any part of the Sinking



Fund to be, for one moment, diverted from its original purpose. His lordship, who called it a *sacred* deposit, seems to have a pretty enough idea of holy things; nor would it be at all wonderful, if the respectable synagogue of loan-makers were to bestow upon him some distinguished mark of their approbation.—Upon the subject of reviving *cash payments* at the bank, Mr. Fox and Lord Henry agreed that the measure might, at no distant day, become as expedient in practice as it unquestionably was correct in principle; and, here, the coincidence in sentiment was such as to have excited wonder as well as admiration, had we not happened to recollect certain notions, which, at one time, got almost into motions, of *Lord Grenville*! His lordship did really talk about cash payments at the bank. He did not absolutely oppose the last “bank-restriction bill” (a phrase that I never can utter or think of without laughing); but, he did something very much like it. Well, then, let us hope, now that his lordship is not only in place, but in *power*; let us now hope, that something in this way will be done. The king’s subjects are loyal; they love to see his picture, which has long been kept from their sight by the intervention of those bits of ragged and dirty paper, a discount upon which the poor labourer is obliged to pay in order to get his week’s wages turned into light and adulterated silver. Give them guineas, my good lord! They will receive them with gratitude, and will bless the hand, be it whose it may, from which they shall drop; and, as to *the means*; as to the where-about to find gold to replace fifty or sixty millions of pounds in bank of England and country-bank paper; as to the motives that will induce men to take a bank-token for five shillings when it comes to circulate side-by-side with a guinea; as to the effect which the restoration of gold will have upon contracts between man and man; as to the sources whence are to be drawn the guineas wherewith to pay the annual interest upon the national debt: as to all these, we must, of course, conclude, that your lordship has, by this time, taken care to make ample provision, and, with this comforting conclusion in our minds, all that we have to do is to wait, with humility and with patience, the happy event.—The latter part of the scene at the debate upon the report was too curious not to notice, though the reader must already be wearied with the subject. Mr. Francis had entered upon the discussion in a true parliamentary way. The subject was of vast importance; yet, not one independent member of the House took any part in it. Those

who attended at first, soon went away; and, long before the close, Lord Henry Petty was left without a soul to assist him, Mr. Vansittart excepted; and there they were well baited by a bevy of quondam clerks of the Treasury, who, had it not been for their respect for and confidence in (respect and confidence not sparingly expressed), *Lord Grenville*, would have divided the House, and would have out-voted the Chancellor of the Exchequer! Mr. Huskisson, as if inspired by his change of place and by the deplorable state of the Treasury Bench, made a speech of an hour and a half long, though those rogues of reporters, like the *Gazetteer* in the case of Captain Bluff, took little or no notice of his feats. Mr. Sturges cracked jokes upon Mr. Fox (whom he was sorry not to see in his place), and was glad to find that the Rt. Hon. gentleman’s former opposition to the Income Tax, which he had characterized as worthy of the *inquisition*, arose merely from the circumstance of its not having been doubled in amount. Mr. George Johnstone, in a manner the most friendly, gave the Chancellor some very good advice, cautioning him, above all things, not to be too sanguine in his expectations as to the correctness of his estimates. Even Mr. Long became eloquent in defence of the system of his Rt. Hon. friend, “now unhappily no more,” and earnestly besought the young Chancellor of the Exchequer to go on, as he had begun, walking in the steps of that pattern of political wisdom and purity. But, it would have done the reader’s heart good (and so it must *Mr. Fox’s* if he had not been gone away) to hear *Old Mr. Rose* chaunting the praises of *Lord Grenville*! That was, by far, the most interesting occurrence; and, whatever the Foxites may think of it, it is something very well worth their pondering upon; nor is it entirely unworthy of the notice of the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, who, if he will take the advice of an old friend, will, with all convenient speed, cease those vain attempts, which he is, for what reason it would puzzle a wizard to know, making to persuade the public that the Pittites are forming an *opposition*, and an opposition, too, to *Lord Grenville*!

\*\*\* I very much regret, that I have not room for some remarks upon the subject of the inquiry with regard to the conduct of Lord Wellesley. The *means* that have been resorted to in order to prevent Mr. HUDLESTONE’S motion should, indeed, not pass for one moment unnoticed. But, there will be another opportunity before the end of the recess.—I wished also to make an obser-



vation or two upon the letter in page 422, upon the subject of the non-residence of the Clergy; and a letter from another correspondent calls upon me to say, that, as to almost every sentiment in the former letter, I totally disagree with the writer.—In page 419 a correspondent represents Mr. WILLIAM DUNDAS as receiving 600*l.* a year out of the crown-rents in Scotland. This correspondent is in error; for, I now am well informed, that Mr. Dundas is in no such receipt; and that he never did enjoy any emolument from the public, nor ever received the salary of any place, except of those which he actually filled at the War-Office, and, before, at the Board of Controul.

## MILITARY PLAN.

*Enfield, March 30, 1806.*

SIR,—Again apologizing for the extreme haste, with which, on account of the urgency of the matter, and the pressure for time, I replied to your first five questions, put to me in your Register of the 22*d.*, I shall now attend to the remaining two. Your words are these; 6. “Does he” [the author of the *Ægis*] “upon a calm view of all the circumstances of our situation, not think that some such plan as that now proposed by me, would, under these circumstances, be likely to render the defence of the country efficient, without endangering the liberties of the people, or the constitutional prerogatives of the crown?”—Again, 7. “I ask him, whether he does not think, that, while my plan would not fail to give strength to civil liberty, at the same time that it increased military power, it would not be more likely to be attended with immediate effect, than the plan which he has proposed? He will observe, that I take the state of things as it now is; I view the nation loaded with a debt, demanding 27 millions annually to pay the interest; I see 2 or 3 millions annually raised for the purpose of paying tax-gatherers and other dependents upon the ministry of the day; I perceive the existence of a trading and a fiscal influence overshadowing, and overbearing every thing; and my object is to aid in the cure of those evils, by the very means that I provide for an efficient defence of the country and of the throne.”—Out of these two questions many important considerations arise. The discussion might fill a volume. To answer them so as to come within the limits of your Register, the columns of which must allow room for every other political topic, must put me under a great disadvantage. For the sake of perspi-

cuity, I shall divide my matter into sections numerically arranged.—I. In p. 388, you profess “a perfect coincidence, as to principle,” with PALEY, on the matter whereupon you quote that writer. If I understand rightly, that principle is, that the constitution of a standing army should be such as “to maintain, upon all occasions, as much alliance of interest, and as much intercourse of sentiment, between the military part of the nation, and the other orders of the people; as are consistent with the union and discipline of an army.”—This sounds mighty well; but to what does it amount? That, so far as you shall be under the necessity of employing a standing army, you shall, by such attentions, counteract as well as you can its inherent tendency to destroy public liberty. But, the able manner in which you have yourself, in the same page, completely overturned some of the principal arguments of PALEY, ought, methinks, to weaken the confidence you express in him as a constitutional writer. On the subjects of the constitution and of liberty, he was a dangerous writer; and ought to be read with great jealousy. The sagacious Hume pronounces “our standing army a mortal distemper in the British constitution;” \* and Blackstone informs us, that “the laws and constitution of these kingdoms, know no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier,” meaning I presume, what you express, by an “army” of “an efficient and permanent description, bred up to no other profession than that of war.”† And it is from much reading and reflection on the subject of standing armies, and trying the foundation on which they stand, with the fundamental principles of civil government, that I now repeat what I said in my last letter, that your excellent plan for improving our regular army, “does not in my judgment, preclude in the smallest degree the necessity of restoring the military branch of the constitution, nor can be made a substitute for it.”—II. Before I proceed in our discussion, in which, perhaps, I may not on some points meet your expectation, I have the most sincere pleasure in saying that, in respect of the regular army, I conceive your plan to be in the true spirit of enlightened, benevolent, and honest legislation; and as such, certainly comes up to one of your own requisites, as being “new” indeed! Towards rendering the existence of a standing regular army comparatively “innocuous to the liberties of the people,” the principles of your plan are highly to be con-

\* Essays II. 376.—† Essays I. 408.



mended; and, as right principles have ever a tendency to beget their like, so all political plans intrinsically good, are naturally productive of habitual reformation and improvement.—III. Under the head of REWARDS, your plan has a strong tendency to attach the soldier to the constitution of his country: but, I must still be allowed to think, there is an inveteracy in the malady of a standing army, incurable by the art of man. Abroad; it is an instrument of your power, and too frequently of a very arbitrary power; but it may perhaps protect your dependencies from governments worse than your own; or defend valuable colonies without obliterating the traces of freedom. At home, it never can be otherwise than an evil, tolerated on account of its utility for your foreign purposes. This, when we compare the military code with our civil constitution, we see to be inevitable. All the plausibilities of such writers as *Paley*, for reconciling a nation to a standing army, as its reliance for defence and security against invasion, or as a necessary instrument of government, I hold to be insidious, and in the highest degree mischievous; or, in point of argument, if really well intended, to be the effect of ignorance in the science of government. Pardon my freedom. This is a great question on which every thing worthy of human consideration depends. Let political writers speak the plain truth. Let them, as you have done, endeavour to mitigate the evil. If we must have a standing army for foreign services, let that army be conciliated to our liberties, by giving it as much reversionary interest in public freedom as can be done; but, after all, your only real security against the sword of a standing army being, by a Cromwell, a Cæsar, or a Napoleon, one day turned against you, is to render its success in overturning your liberties an impossibility. It must be outnumbered beyond any degree of comparison, by the armed citizens, rightly organized for military service, ready in a moment to defend alike the laws and magistracy, the peace of your towns or counties, your country or constitution. Never forget that the standing army is your military arm for foreign operations and interests, and ought in no case to be made an instrument of domestic government. Whatever may be in other respects the form or title of a government, the criterion by which you ascertain whether it be in reality a civil or a military, that is, a free or a despotic government, is its ultimate means of enforcing its authority. If those means are the arms of its organized citizens, it is a free government; if those of a standing army, it is a

despotism. Beware, therefore, Mr. Cobbett, how you recommend to us for our "efficient defence" a "permanent" standing army! Despotisms introduced, by gradually and insensibly undermining a free state, are often deeply rooted and fully established long before they are known to exist, even by those under their power. You have often seen a great house dog among children: you have seen him ridden; harnessed in the little phaeton; made to fetch and carry; and a constant play-fellow, apparently "innocuous" to these careless little people; while the animal possessed all the while the power, if once the savage fit came upon him, of tearing them piecemeal. IV. As the proper duties of a standing army are painful and arduous, full of privation and suffering, reward it nobly; give the soldier a gratifying repose on the bosom of the country he has faithfully served; and render the honoured veteran an object of future respect. To your noble idea, for which I shall ever respect you, of communicating to the retired soldier the elective franchise, let me suggest another source of gratification. If he retire at the age of *forty*, he has yet before him many years of probable ability for the easy, but important duties of an armed citizen in the county power. Of this body, his military experience, if he has any talent, will render him a highly valuable member, insuring to him at the same time distinction and command, sweetening the remembrance of past toils and dangers, by the proud consciousness of continuing to the very evening of life a most useful soldier, the chosen guardian of that happy constitution to the full benefit of which he has been admitted, a conservator of peace and order, and an active protector of the laws and institutions of his country. Thus it would be seen how right systems, all properly directed to the public good, mutually benefit and improve each other. The complete restoration of the military branch of the constitution, at the same time that it established our liberties on a rock, would raise us in real solid, useful, well-wearing power, far superior to *France*, and make us, like our Saxon ancestors under *Alfred*, a martial people. The youth of a martial people are prone to arms, and resort to the camp as naturally as the young eagle seeks the sky. Bounties! No: were you to offer bounties to keep them at home, you could not succeed. Seeing the soldier, after military adventures in all quarters of the world, returning at *forty* to enter into his inheritance of freedom, of authority, of honours and distinctions for the remainder of his life; what could restrain the gallant



youth of our country from pouring into the army faster than it could receive them! And, on the other hand, this flowing back of the veterans of such an army, towards preserving in full vigour the military character and efficiency of the county power, would have a happy co-operation with suitable laws for the purpose of averting from it that neglect in future, which was first occasioned by the introduction of the feudal system, and afterwards artfully continued, by what the Earl of Liverpool has rightly called a "detestable policy."\* Your incitements to military service have their foundations in nature; they call forth the noble and generous affections; and when combined with such other incitements as are touched upon in the *Ægis* (I. 56) the sagacious law-giver, notwithstanding the debt, the taxes, and trafficking spirit of our country, may, as I conceive, build its defence on its freedom, and enable it to rise superior to all difficulties. If, indeed, the wisdom of the law-giver is to abide the vote of the sordid children of 'Change Alley, and the servile creatures of faction, neither county power nor regular army, may avail.—V. But, perhaps, I ought to have commenced this discussion, by remarking that the two military systems, *yours*, and that which you pay me the compliment of calling *mine*; but which, in fact, has for its author an unrivalled legislator, in whose name I must ever speak of it, cannot be made subjects of a comparison strictly proper, and fully satisfactory; for, if not in all particulars radically different, they are essentially distinct species of the same genus, adapted to separate ends and purposes. A county power could not garrison the Cape of Good Hope, or carry on war in India, without first changing its nature and ruining half its members. Neither could a standing army become alone an "efficient defence" of our country, without producing both national bankruptcy and slavery. The revenues of the country could not maintain an army sufficient for our security against *France*; and it is self-evident that such an army and liberty could not together exist.—VI. You suppose the regular army to consist of only 200,000 men, upon which you found your calculation of 600,000*l.* being the annual sum we should have to pay the parents of these men; but now, Mr. Cobbett, let me, in my turn, ask you, if "you have duly considered" the demands of men for all foreign services, before the residue became applicable to home defence? Where you shall have provided garrisons for Gibraltar, Malta, and the Cape of Good

Hope; armies for Canada, New Brunswick, and all our West India Islands; other armies for our widely extended Asiatic dominions, and our Asiatic wars; others again for Guernsey, Jersey, and IRELAND; besides "a disposeable force" for Mediterranean or other expeditions; how many of your 200,000 men will be left at home; and, after making the necessary deduction for raw recruits, remain as our "efficient defence?"—After what you may read in the last chapter of the *Ægis*, I apprehend it must be evident, that your army, after all deductions, could not become an "efficient defence" to our Island, unless you were to add to it *many hundred thousand men more*. And this, on the scale of our population, in the real scarcity which I take it there is of the animal, man, in the recruiting market for any such demands, and under the pressure of our pecuniary difficulties, could not be effected without rending asunder the very texture of society, and leaving us nothing to preserve.—VII. By an attention to the wording and nature of your 6th question, you must perceive the difficulty of answering it. When a noble Duke offers a specific, detailed plan, for defending the country with 500,000 well organized militia, and about 30,000 regulars, there is distinct matter of investigation. According to my own judgment I have shewn that even this force, is not half the force we ought to have; and, really not adequate to our defence against the attacks we may expect; and that *a reliance upon it would be extremely likely to invite invasion, and expose us to the horrors and incalculable mischiefs of having England the seat of a bloody war*. I am aware that at first sight I may be thought in an error: but I feel perfectly satisfied of having established my point. It took up, however, thirty-eight pages of my book, a book pretty close printed, to go through the argument.—But your question, referring to your admirable plan of military reform, and only "*supposing* the army to consist of 200,000 men," without a word of any co-operating force, merely asks, "if I do not think that *some such plan* " would be likely to render the defence of "the country efficient, without endangering the liberties of the people, or the constitutional prerogatives of the crown?" How am I to shape any thing like a direct answer to such a question?—Speaking of the system of Alfred, detailed and illustrated by me in the *Ægis*, you observe that "I do not exclude the establishment of a regular military force." Now, if, by the very handsome terms in which you have spoken of my efforts, coupled with your silence on

\* See England's *Ægis*.—Index.



a county power co-operating with your *regulars*, you, on the other hand, mean I should take such co-operation for granted, then, in that case, supposing such county power to be what it ought to be, no doubt in my opinion could be entertained on the sufficiency of our powers of defence; nor of the security to liberty or to the constitutional prerogatives of the crown.—VIII. It is equally difficult to frame a clear and concise answer to your 7th question. It is assumed, but without a specific and accurate foundation for the assumption, that your plan would, as indeed, *with proper accompaniments* I agree it would, “give strength to civil liberty at the same time that it increased military power,” and then you ask if “it would not be more likely to be attended with *immediate effect*, than the plan which I have proposed?” By the *alternative* in this question, I am expected of course to give a preference to one of the plans, to the *exclusion* of the other. I am also supposed to know that which I do not know: namely, the present effective strength of the *regular* army at home, for on that must very much turn the “*immediate effect*” of your plan.—Now, admitting, as I do, the propriety of always keeping up on the whole such a regular army, as shall be sufficient to support the rotation and supply of all necessary foreign services, I see no occasion for excluding the proper proportion which, for those purposes, must be in readiness at home, from being reckoned upon in a plan of defence. Nay, if the home army were now much greater than such a proportion, I would not propose at this moment its reduction; nor until the military branch of the constitution were restored to health and vigour.—Here, the plain and useful question I take to be this: under which plan could our present military strength, whatever it be, either in magnitude or in description, be most rapidly and best augmented until it became an “efficient defence?”—Now, I have already shewn, on pecuniary, political, and physical principles, that a *regular*, and a *hired* army never can become such a defence. In addition to these, there is the moral principle, which must excite universal disgust, and probably open rebellion, should parliament resort to a direct conscription, and “*lay its hand upon the people*,” in order to give “*immediate effect*” to a plan of defence by a regular army; means which you have justly reprobated.—What remains, then, but that we adopt your excellent reformation of the army, and at the same time restore the grand and unrivalled system of Alfred. Here, although “the legislature” do not “*lay its*

“*hand upon the people*, by a levy, *immediate, personal, and compulsory*,” to form an army of “men who are, at any moment, liable to be sent out of the kingdom, and who, in all probability, must pass, or ought to pass, more than one half of their time, beyond the seas;” yet, for *home defence*, for the preservation of our laws and liberties, the CONSTITUTION, in the very spirit of freedom, “confidently, justly, honourably, and wisely presumes every man a volunteer in such a cause; and, consequently, it dictates only an organization of the collective force, the means of rendering it effective, and the regulations under which it shall be exerted.”\* Do you want “*immediate effect*?” Here is the whole physical force of the nation, every human being able to bear arms, given by the CONSTITUTION, by a feeling of common duty, and the highest of moral principles, into the hand of the government for the common defence. What would ye more? Out of the whole community of the English nation, cannot the war minister *immediately* draw forth twice, or thrice, or five times, or ten times, as many men as he can possibly enlist for the regular army, and train them to arms, either in their parishes, or in quarters, or in camp, as exigency may require? And what is to hinder a substantial, and early restoration of a general constitutional army, bearing for national defence, adequate to the public safety? Should the low-minded imbecillity question the practicability of a change in our condition so grand, and so salutary, Mr. Windham, I trust, can answer in the spirit of the English physician once sent for to prescribe to a King of France, and who, when asked by the Parisian College, “what is a fever?” replied, “It is a disease you can’t cure and I can.”—IX. Perhaps your proposed exemptions of the retired soldiers from serving on juries, from officiating in civil and parish offices, and from an impress for public military services, may deserve reconsideration. To invest them with invidious privileges, might counteract your intention of rendering them objects of affection and respect.—The grand sentiment of making “*the liberties of England*,” in every battle, the sequel for the onset, ought to make you as anxious as myself for the complete restoration of the military system of Alfred. It is not merely because it is the best system of defence against invasion, that it ought to be restored; but, because it is also an essential part of our CONSTITUTION; because, arms-bearing of the people must ever be essential to civil liberty;



and, because, in the new order of things in Europe, we have a mighty enemy, as sleepless as the fabled dragon, that in peace as in war will ever "seek our subjugation." It is by this restamping of the martial character of our ancestors, on our modern *civil* state, combined with your *military* reform, that you can alone have a complete solution of your question, "*How is the nation to be rendered military; military not in shew, not in the abundance of red coats; but military in spirit?*"—Besides, looking to our finances, it is become a sacred duty to avoid all occasions of unnecessary expense; looking to the probability of Asiatic or other disasters; and looking to the possibility of European opportunities of desirable enterprise; sound policy demands that you should be ever ready, not only to part with every disposable soldier, but, to set up a *standard of service*, to which should instantly flock from "*a military nation*," a powerful regular army.—I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

#### MILITARY PLAN.

SIR,—Having read with much satisfaction your general thoughts relative to the improvement of the army, allow me to offer a few remarks on one or two particulars, which you have mentioned in your plan, and on another which you have unaccountably omitted.—Your idea of allowing a sum of money yearly to the parents of those who are at present in the service, or who hereafter shall be enlisted, is, I think, most excellent; and, though 3 guineas may at first sight appear trifling, yet when we consider that it is in fact, upwards of one shilling per week, and that one shilling and sixpence is frequently the additional support granted by a *parish* to a labouring family, the sum will not appear so inconsiderable; even allowing one shilling and sixpence per week, the number of persons claiming this bounty would scarcely raise it to 600,000*l.* per annum.—Your wish that the soldier should, on returning to his native home, after having faithfully discharged his duty for a *term of years*, be entitled to some distinguished privileges, appears most just and reasonable; to their having the right of voting for a member of parliament, I should conceive no one can object, but to that of killing game, I fear many will. On first reading that part of your plan no objections presented themselves to me; however, on talking the matter over with a friend, he suggested a reason against its being adopted, which appears to

have some weight; it is this; that as game throughout the country is very scarce, and is becoming scarcer, every endeavour should be made to preserve it, in order to induce the men of *landed property* to reside on their estates, who would not otherwise be inclined to do so. Perhaps you may think this argument insufficient to overbalance your's, and, if so, I shall be much obliged to you to enlarge a little on the subject in your next Number, as it is a measure I am still strongly inclined to think favourably of.—Though like yourself I am an enemy to any compulsory measures for recruiting the army; yet, I greatly fear, that if your plan was put in practice, the immediate good effects would not be such as to add greatly to the strength of it. I agree with you, that the sole consideration of the men being taken for a term of years, and not for their whole lives, will produce a great, and to some degree, an immediate change in favour of the recruiting; but, we must recollect, that in the minds of the lower classes, the prejudices against the army are very powerful, that they are so strongly rooted as not to be overcome but by very slow degrees; and, though I think you have pointed out the means by which we may hope to profit hereafter, yet, as the exigencies of the times call loudly for an immediate *efficient* increase to the army, I do not see how that desirable end can be obtained, unless the ballot, in some mode or other, is still employed: because it is not at once thrown aside, there is no good reason why it should not be dispensed with, when your plan or a similar one shall have had the effect of producing such an alteration in the minds of the country people, as to allow it to be done with advantage.—I am anxious to add a few words on your opinion concerning the non-increase of pay to men who have served one or two terms, and on that of not granting additional privileges to those who shall have risen to be non-commissioned officers before they quit the service. Your motive for not adding to their pay, seems to arise from your conviction that they have already sufficient for all their purposes, and that more would, in fact, be a disadvantage to them; that is, that if they had more it would be spent at the alehouse; but, with the general improvements of the army, why should we not look for an improvement in the conduct of the men, in this and other particulars? that it is possible to bring men to such perfection by proper management, as that they will abstain from drinking in spite of strong temptation. I am convinced, and I will mention, in favour of my argu-



ment, a remarkable occurrence which actually took place. A regiment, consisting almost entirely of Irishmen, (who are not generally averse to drinking) was marched into a town in the West Indies; and, its inhabitants having abandoned it, the rum-cellars were all left open; and though the soldiers remained at perfect liberty during 48 hours, not a single man was intoxicated; and this was affected by previous good discipline. I do not think, Mr. Cobbett, you argue quite fairly in saying, that "promotion arises in many, if not in all cases, from the circumstances of an advantageous figure, &c." But, allowing that you do, I do not see why your arguments would not equally apply to giving them no greater pay than the privates, while serving, as to not granting to those who shall at the end of their term be found in the situations of non-commissioned officers, "privileges and immunities somewhat higher than those allotted to men who had never attained that rank."—I come now to the last topic, viz. an increase of pay to the officers, which I was greatly surprised to find had no place in your plan. The principal argument in favour of a *liberal* increase of pay to the officers, is simply this: it has not been raised since the reign of *Queen Anne*; can any more powerful reason be assigned? Can any other be acquired? I appeal, Mr. Cobbett, to your heart, which is favourably inclined towards the profession; I appeal to the understanding of all capable of appreciating the importance of the subject, whether they are not in *reason* entitled to an additional income; whether the army can arise in the estimation of the country, while its officers are forced to exist on that which was only considered to be a suitable provision 100 years ago! There are now many young men of education and family, who decline entering the army, merely because their friends are unable to furnish them an adequate allowance for their simple maintenance; whilst those who have not received the advantage of a good education, feel none of that necessary kind of pride; and are, therefore, unluckily not deterred from offering *their* services. Any one who is a judge of the human disposition, will be satisfied, that persons regarding themselves as objects of *pity*, will not be readily induced to evince that kind of manly spirited conduct so essential to the military character. That this is *precisely* the situation in which officers of the army are at present placed, I will not say, but I *do* think, that by the lower orders, and, especially the *trading* part, the sentiment entertained for them is that either of

*pity* or *contempt*; pity excited by a consideration of their *poverty*, or *contempt* for actions to which that *poverty* impels them: the common kind of tradesmen are cautious of trusting an officer with their goods, from the fear of not being paid, whilst those who have risen to affluence by their trade, positively talk of giving *an officer of his Majesty's army a dinner as an act of charity!!!* Can any thing be more humiliating, more shockingly degrading than this picture, which I do not think overcharged. From your having promised that if objections are made to your plan, you will communicate them to your readers, I am led to hope that you will favour me, by inserting the foregoing remarks. I am particularly anxious to recommend the perusal of the *latter part* to Col. Crauford, who *voluntarily pledged himself* to introduce the subject in the House of Commons, early in the present session.—I am, Sir, &c. &c.

BELISARIUS.

#### MILITARY PLAN.

SIR,—Thinking, as I sincerely do, that your plan for raising an army is noble and excellent in its principles, and highly judicious in most of its details, I will take the liberty of stating the objections which occur to me on two points. The great and leading object pointed out by Blackstone, and all constitutional writers, well stated by Paley, and adopted as a motto by yourself, is to preserve in the minds of the soldiers the constant recollection that they are citizens, and to separate them as little as possible from the community, of which they form a part. While, in pursuance of this object, you propose (for the first time, I believe, but in my opinion with equal justice and good sense) that soldiers, as such, after serving for a certain period, shall acquire a share in the legislature of their country, on what consistent principle are they to be excluded from its judicial administration? "*Exempted from serving on juries?*" This exemption would be to deny them the noblest and most important privilege enjoyed by their countrymen; the loss of which is so far from being considered by the law of England, as a matter of gain or honour, that it is a most prominent part of the punishment of those who are rendered infamous by their crimes. "You have fought our battles, secured our independence, extended our renown: in return, we will confer on you indeed a few flattering immunities, but cannot trust you with the lives, the liberties, or property of your peers." Is it in this language, or even in



language capable of this construction, that a grateful country should address her defenders? No, Sir; the excellence of your plan consists in rendering the union between constitutional feelings and the military spirit, strong and inseparable; and the former are proved by experience to be kept alive, and cherished by no part of our political system, so much as the trial by jury.—My other objection you have anticipated, but not, I think, removed. The omission of a provision for the wives and families of soldiers is justified, because “such provision would operate as a premium for marriage and population, than which nothing can be more contrary to all sound principles of political economy.” Here is an allusion to the work of Mr. Malthus, which has afforded us so much instruction and delight. Of that work, I think the principle, or rather, I should call it, the *leading fact*, is ably and fully proved; nor can anything be more ingenious or acute than the manner in which it is traced in all its curious varieties through the different countries of the world. Population has a natural tendency to outgrow the means of sustenance; when it does outgrow them, it produces great evils; instead, therefore, of promoting and extending population, our study ought to be to limit and confine it within proper bounds. All this is granted. But then follows another inference, viz. that it is, therefore, proper to throw discouragements and impediments in the way of marriage. This deduction I, with the greatest diffidence, presume to question: I will even venture to throw out for consideration, whether in this country, and in our state of manners, marriage is not rather a check than an encouragement to population. Let us remember, that here the alternative is not as in Norway and Siberia, between marriage and chastity, but between marriage and libertinism; and that, while the married pair do not add to population once a twelve-month, the roving husband of many wives may produce even a daily increase. The alternative is not between numbers born in wedlock, to consume the fruits of the earth, and a total stagnation of births in consequence of celibacy, but between the lawful issue of marriage, the joy, the pride, and support of their families, for whose existence and comfort, industry and frugality may make narrow means sufficient, and the dissipated, and perhaps, more numerous offspring of licentious indulgence, the reproach and shame of their parents, the outcasts of the world, its plunderers and victims. I cannot see the resemblance between the Foundling

and Chelsea Hospitals; children must be born, but need not be born bastards; the one charity therefore, provides for an event which will inevitably happen, while the other holds out a premium for its being brought about in a manner injurious to the morals and interests of society. Nay, one might go farther; for, if the Foundling has any considerable influence in promoting an illicit commerce, by preparing a maintenance for illegitimate children, it may become necessary to counteract that effect by opening a similar provision to such as are born in wedlock. The case of the soldier, however, stands quite clear of these abstract speculations: his demand is irresistible, when he calls on the justice of his country to contribute to the support of that family, which his own engagement in the public service prevents him from maintaining. With regard to the policy of permitting soldiers to marry, keep still in view your leading principle, and consider what ties can bind a man so strongly to the mass of the people, as a wife and children, born, bred, and living among them, and connecting him by a thousand endearing affinities to all the other orders of the community. In a plan for creating a military spirit by the operation of men's feelings, do not neglect the best and strongest which sway the human heart, the conjugal and parental; these can receive their proper gratification from marriage alone; the former is wasted in a vicious intercourse between the sexes, and the latter baffled and mortified by an undistinguished, profligate, and unlawful progeny. By assisting the wives and children of the military, by supporting their widows and orphans, the state will acquire the strongest hold on their gratitude and affection, and remove (what must often sink the spirits and unnerve the arm of the brave in the day of battle) the painful dread of leaving the objects of their tenderest care exposed to misery and want, to infamy or starvation.—The exact sum which it might be fit to appropriate to this purpose, the terms on which the distribution should be made, the circumstances by which varied, with other considerations of the same nature, must be deferred to some other occasion.—I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant.—A CONSTANT READER.—*Edgworth, March 27.*

#### MILITARY PLAN.

SIR,—I have been induced to trouble you with this letter, having perused your plan for the defence of the country in your



last Number. I think it excellent, as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough. I differ with you essentially in your first principle; viz. that there ought to be only *one sort of army*. In my opinion, on the contrary, no plan can be eligible, which does not embrace the whole physical strength of the country; and, in some shape or other, raise every arm in its defence.—Whoever considers the respective positions of France and England, must perceive, that the former is necessarily a military power; that her political influence depends upon the number of her regular troops, and her military discipline; it is far otherwise with England; her power and influence are derived from far other sources. Her insular situation; her navy, her trade, manufactures, and colonies; and the independent and enterprising spirit and industry of her inhabitants. France has *her weapons*. We have *ours*. David did not go forth to meet the giant with a sword and a spear; but he slew him with a sling and a stone.—I shall not trouble you, Sir, with any more preliminary observations, but immediately proceed to give you a sketch of my plan, in which I shall be as brief as possible. And, first, I shall lay down three general principles. 1st. That the officers of every description of military force, be appointed by the King.—2dly. That no subject be compellable to military service, except in defence of his native country.—3dly. That, in case of invasion, the person of every subject be at the King's disposal.—I believe these principles are acknowledged by, and are in strict conformity to the British constitution.—I shall now proceed to enumerate the different descriptions of force, to be employed in the national defence.—1st. The regular army, constituted according to Mr. Cobbett's plan.—2dly. The militia, ballotted for in the usual manner, and mutually transferable into the three United Kingdoms.—3dly. The supplementary militia, equal in number to the embodied militia, to be trained one month in every year, in their own county, by a detachment of officers and non-commissioned officers from the county regiment; to be liable to be called out, only in case of invasion. The men not to be exempt from the ballot for the embodied militia. I should imagine it would be scarcely necessary to clothe these men for the single month, and unless they should be called out. Thus, this supplementary militia would furnish government with a tangible force, in

case of invasion, at a most trifling expense.—4thly. The volunteers, without pay and without exemption, except from the drill of the Levy-en-Masse, hereafter mentioned; clothing to be furnished by themselves; to be upon a cheap plan, and of the same pattern, throughout the United Kingdoms; Government to supply the arms and accoutrements, to be kept in order by the volunteers themselves; to be formed into companies, regiments, and brigades; each regiment to assemble twice a year, and to act in brigade as often.—It is intended, under these regulations to form the volunteers into a sort of parochial militia, to consist of a description of men, whose occupations would prevent them from becoming regular soldiers, but whom it would be highly essential to arm.—5thly. The Levy-en-Masse, to consist of every male in the kingdom from the age of fifteen to fifty, who does not belong to any of the before-mentioned descriptions of military force; to be trained by serjeant-majors, under the command of the deputy lieutenants of the respective counties. These serjeant-majorships might be so many honourable rewards, for the soldiers of the regular army, who have completed their fifteen years' service with credit and reputation. The drill of the Levy-en-Masse to be appointed with as little deduction as possible from the labour and industry of the country. Sunday mornings, and summer evenings, would be quite sufficient; and, indeed, the trouble would lessen every day; for, in a short time, every man would be capable of instructing his neighbour. The Levy-en-Masse to be divided into classes; and, in case of necessity, to be armed with pikes and short swords. Every parish-church in the kingdom might form a depôt of such arms, for the use of the whole population.—By adopting the above plan, Mr. Cobbett, we should become (if I may be allowed the distinction) not a *military* but an *armed nation*; which, considering the vast power of the enemy, it behoves us to be. It would moreover, Sir, further your own views; for, by infusing a military spirit into the people, and giving every man a military education, sufficient to enable him to act as a private soldier, together with those encouragements held out in the plan proposed in your last Register, you would inevitably fill the ranks of your regular army.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your

most obedient servant,

T. C. P.